

COMMUNITY FEEDBACK SUB-WORKING GROUP – EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA

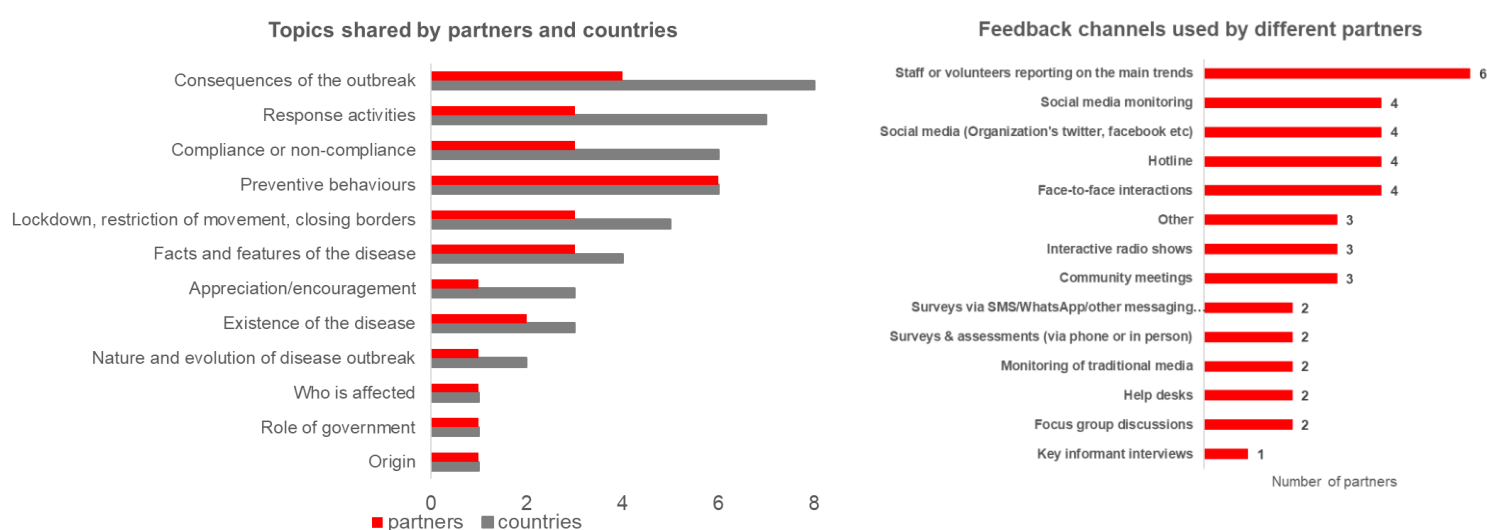
COVID-19 COMMUNITY FEEDBACK TRENDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

October 2020

This report documents the main trends in community feedback reported by agencies responding to COVID-19 across East and Southern Africa for the month of October. It was prepared by the community feedback sub-working group, which is part of the COVID-19 Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) Interagency Working Group.

9 partners have shared their priorities (*GOAL, Ground Truth Solutions / U-learn, IFRC, Internews, Mercy Corps, Novetta, Save the Children, UNICEF, WHO*).

Feedback trends have been heard in **13 countries** in the East and Southern Africa region (*Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe*).



Concerns about the consequences of the outbreak (heard in 8 countries by 4 partners)

To address **increased cases of marriage, pregnancies, school drop out and GBV**:

- **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share the factsheets on: 1. [Children and Covid-19](#) and 2. [Youth and Covid-19](#) as well as this [UNICEF guidance note](#) with parents' groups, teachers and community leaders which highlights the risks of not sending children to school and provides tips on how to keep children safe at school.
- **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Apply the sector specific actions outlined in the [IASC interim guidance 'gender alert for Covid-19 outbreak'](#) which includes recommendations on tackling child marriage and teen pregnancy.
- **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL AND REGIONAL LEVEL:** Advocate for integrated programs that can address the economic problems faced by poor families. Engage key government ministries, such as health, social welfare and education, on discussions to lower school fees, provide free school supplies or subsidize school fees for poor families whilst livelihoods are adversely affected by Covid-19.

To address **delayed care seeking leading to increase in severe cases and deaths**:

- **RCCE, SURVEILLANCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Social science colleagues to conduct a desk review of research around perceptions and attitudes regarding health seeking behaviours during Covid-19 to inform practical cross-pillar guidance.

Response activities *(heard in 7 countries by 3 partners)*

To address **requests for personal protective equipment and targeting**:

- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** In consultation with MoH, hold regular orientation meetings with community groups, health care workers, social mobilisers, teachers, religious leaders and traditional healers to share up-to-date figures of infection rates at the district/provincial level and the strategy for targeting distribution of PPE.
- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Identify and promote community lead solutions to addressing the challenge of PPE and masks e.g. manufacture and use of local masks. [This factsheet](#) provides useful information on facemasks, including how to make your own. This [SSHAP guidance](#) may also be useful for identifying and supporting community-led solutions.

To address concerns about **healthcare worker infections**:

- **RCCE, IPC AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** IPC, Case Management and RCCE colleagues to discuss how to repackage data on healthcare worker infections to ensure guidance, SOPs and other information products are useful and accessible for frontline health workers and communities.
- **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Discuss approaches to better understand community-level perceptions of health care workers, including stigma.

Beliefs about preventive behaviours and treatment *(heard in 6 countries by 6 partners)*

To address **observations or beliefs about face masks**:

- **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Increase risk communication on proper use of face masks (focus on household visits/community meetings with high-risk communities to ensure understanding).
- **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Use, adapt and translate in to local languages the inter-agency [factsheet on face masks](#) which answers frequently asked questions about masks with health care workers, religious and community leaders, social mobilizers and other front line workers.
- **RCCE ACTIONS AT REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVELS:** Partner with political leadership to take part in and promote [Africa Mask Week](#) (23rd – 30th November).

To address **rumours on COVID-19 prevention and treatment methods**:

- **RCCE ACTIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Review and update the [inter-agency fact sheet on treatments](#) to ensure it includes recent information on clinical trials of treatment options.
- **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Humanitarian actors could identify health professionals, community healers and outreach workers to reinforce messages about

preventative measures through them and have a more contextually-sensitive understanding of the differences between COVID- 19 and flu.

Compliance and non-compliance *(heard in 6 countries by 3 partners)*

To address **conflicting messages leading to confusion and mistrust** and **selective implementation of the public health measures**:

1. **RCCE ACTIONS AT REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share this feedback with Humanitarian Country Teams, Strategic Advisory Groups, Humanitarian Partnership Teams and other high-level coordination groups to encourage senior management advocacy action with political leadership on the issue of mistrust.
2. **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Engage with political leadership to create videos promoting the importance of preventative measures, like videos created in [Malawi](#) and [Botswana](#).

To address **decreasing risk perception**:

1. **RCCE ACTIONS AT REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL:** Share the [story of coronavirus](#) film and get it dubbed in local languages
2. **RCCE AND CASE MANAGEMENT ACTIONS AT REGIONAL AND COUNTRY LEVEL:** Support media and journalists to collect testimonies of persons infected with COVID-19 (only with their informed consent) and reinforce prevention measures through medical expert opinion
3. **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Work with community health workers to address rumours/beliefs about the seriousness of COVID-19, amplify the risk to communities for complacency and remind communities how to protect themselves

Lockdown, restriction of movement, re-opening borders *(heard in 6 countries by 2 partners)*

To address **rumours and beliefs about lockdown**:

1. **RCCE ACTIONS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:** Collaborate with political leadership to produce short videos explaining why lockdown measures are needed to reduce the spread of the virus in local languages

To address **rise of COVID-19 fake certificates**:

1. **RCCE AND SURVEILLANCE ACTIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Share this feedback with Surveillance TWG to discuss options for strengthening the Covid-19 certificate authentication process so that is harder to replicate.
2. **RCCE AND SURVEILLANCE ACTIONS AT REGIONAL LEVEL:** Host a webinar and produce guidance on cross-border RCCE strategies to showcase best practice at field level.

For more information on the work of the RCCE community feedback sub-working group, please contact Sophie Everest at sophie.everest@ifrc.org.

For information on how these topics and previously highlighted topics are addressed, please visit our [online tracking table](#).